

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria



SUMMARY

Algeria has gone through many changes in its demographic profile. Marriages and preferences for smaller families are attributed to increases in women's education and participation in the labor market, higher unemployment, and a shortage of housing forcing multiple generations to live together. Sub-Saharan African migrants came to Algeria after its civil war to work in agriculture and mining. In the 200s, a wave of educated Algerians went abroad seeking jobs, increasing their presence in North America and Spain. Legal foreign workers from China and Egypt came to work in Algeria at the same time. Since 1975, Algeria has been the main recipient of Sahrawi refugees from the ongoing Western Sahara (today part of Morocco) conflict. More than 100,000 Sahrawis are estimated to be living in five refugee camps in southwestern Algeria.

Chief of State: President Abdelmadjid Tebboune (December 12, 2019)

Head of Government: Prime Minister Nadir Larbaoui (November 11, 2023)

Capital: Algiers

Other notable cities: Bethioua, Timimoun, Tindouf, In Guezzam, Constantine, Skikda

Gov Type: Presidential Republic

Population: 47,022,473

Colonial History: Turkish rule from 1500 until 1830 when the French take over. Algeria gained its independence in 1962.

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Algeria is located in Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, and is between Morocco and Tunisia. It is 2,381,740 sq km in total area of land and borders Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, and Tunisia. Algeria is arid, with mild, wet winters and hot, dry summers along the coast. In the high plateau, it has drier, cold winters and hot summers. It consists mostly of high plateau and desert, with the Atlas Mountains in the far north and Hoggar Mountains in the south. It is a narrow, discontinuous coastal plain. It is also the largest country in Africa.

Its natural resources include petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, uranium, lead, and zinc and 17.4% of its land is used in agriculture, with forest land consisting of 0.8% and 81.8% consisting of 'other'. Much of its population is found in the extreme northern part of the country along the Mediterranean Coast. The land is subject to severe earthquakes, mudslides and floods, and droughts.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Noun: Algerian(s)

Adjective: Algerian

Ethnic Groups: Arab-Amazigh (99%), European (less than 1%)

Languages: Arabic (official), French (lingua franca), Tamazight (official - dialects include Kabyle, Shawiya, Mzab, and Tuareg)

Religions: Muslim (99%, official - predominantly Sunni), other (<1% - includes Christian, Jewish, Ahmadi Muslim, Shia Muslim, Ibadi Muslim)

After independence from France, Algeria's fertility rate fell from 7 children per woman to 2.4 in 2000. This was mostly due to women's rising age at first marriage, with most children being born in wedlock, as well as a use of contraceptives. In the early 2000s, the average woman's age at first marriage dropped slightly.

ECONOMY AND GDP

Algeria has a suffering oil and gas economy, with a lack of sector and market diversification. Political instability has chilled domestic consumption, along with poor credit access and declines in business confidence. There are currently delayed promise socio-economic reforms.

Real GDP: \$502.837 billion (2022)

Real GDP Growth Rate: 3.2% (2022)

Real GDP Per Capita: \$11,200 (2022)

GDP (Official Exchange Rate): \$194.998 billion (2022)

GDP Composition: Agriculture 13.3% (2017), Industry 39.3% (2017), and Services 47.4% (2017).

Inflation Rate: 9.27% (2022)

Industries: Petroleum, natural gas, light industries, mining, electrical, petrochemical, and food processing.

Labor Force: 13.023 million (2022).

Unemployment Rate: 12.49%, youth unemployment rate stands at 31.9% (2022).

Population Below Poverty Line: 5.5% (2019)

Public Debt: 27.5% of GDP (2017)

Exports: \$69.058 billion (partners include Italy, Spain, France, United States, and South Korea) 2022 est.

Imports: \$46.617 billion (partners include China, France, Italy, Turkey, and Brazil) 2022 est.

MAIN POLITICAL CONTENTIONS

Algeria based its foreign policy approach on long-standing principles following its independence in 1962. Inspired by its own anti-colonial struggle, Algiers adopted self-determination and anti-colonial causes as a diplomatic tool to expand its influence, particularly on the African continent. Algerian authorities continue to express solidarity with African liberation movements, the Palestinian people, and the Polisario Front.

Algeria and Morocco are currently in a dispute over the Western Sahara. Algeria seeks to prevent Morocco from reclaiming a territory that would increase its strategic depth and make it the undisputed regional leader of the Maghreb. It is also invested in preventing a Moroccan-Israeli alliance by improving relations with Egypt, the GCC, and the rest of the Arab world.

Algeria is also in the midst of an attempted mediation of conflict in Libya and Sahel, although these efforts have been thwarted by foreign interference in Libya and executing the Algiers Accords has been extremely difficult in Sahel.

After the events of October 7th in Gaza, Algeria has declared full solidarity with Palestine and continues to stand for an independent Palestinian State.

Economy and Politics

ALGERIA: A TIMELINE

In 1976, Col Boumedienne introduces a new constitution which would confirm commitment to socialism and the role of the National Liberation Front as the sole political party, with Islam recognized as the state religion. Later that year, Col Boumedienne is elected president and begins launching a program of rapid industrialization. By 1986, inflation and unemployment rose rapidly, exacerbated by the collapse of oil and gas prices, which leads to a wave of strikes and violent demonstrations.

In 1992, the military forces President Chadli to dissolve parliament and resign, replacing him with a Higher State Council that is chaired by Mohamed Boudiaf. The government then declares a state of emergency and disbands the FIS and all of its local and regional council administrations, which triggers ten years of conflict. Later that year, Head of State Boudiaf is assassinated, which increases violence, and the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) emerges as the main group behind the operations. In 1995, Col Zeroual wins the presidential election and in 1996 he proposes constitutional changes which are approved by 85% of voters. In 1997, parliamentary elections are won by the new Democratic National Rally, which is followed by the Movement of Society for Peace moderate Islamic party.

In 2005, authorities announce the arrest of the head of GIA Nourredine Boudiafi and the killing of his deputy. In 2007, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat renames itself al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb and steps up attacks. Later that year, parliamentary elections are held and dozens are killed beforehand in a clash between the military and armed groups. In 2008, Parliament approves constitutional changes that allow President Bouteflika to run for a third term and in 2009 he wins his third term. In 2010, Algeria, Mauritania, Mali, and Niger set up a joint command to tackle the threat of terrorism.

In 2019, street protests lead to Bouteflika's resignation and Abdelkader Bensalah becomes interim president with protests continuing. A Human Rights Watch is issued in 2021 after protesters are arrested and this continues to present day. Algeria currently maintains its pro-Palestine stance and advocates for a independent Palestinian State after the events of October 7th.

Algeria joins the League of Arab States in 1962, as well as gaining its independence from France. In 1963, Ahmed Ben Bella is elected as the first President, but he is overthrown in 1965 when Col Houari Boumedienne overthrows him, pledging to end corruption.

Beginning in 1988, riots and protests become prevalent due to economic conditions. In 1989, the National People's Assembly revokes the ban on new political parties and adopts a new electoral law that allows opposition parties to contest future elections. Due to this, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) is founded and over 20 new parties are licensed. In 1990, the FIS wins 55% of the vote in local elections and in 1991 the FIS wins 188 seats outright.

In 1999, former Foreign Minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika is elected president after all other candidates withdraw due to concerns over fairness and transparency. Later that year, President Bouteflika's law on civil concord is approved, which is the result of secret negotiations with the FIS and Islamic Salvation Army (AIS). Many members of the AIS and other armed groups are pardoned.

In 2000, attacks on civilians and security forces continue. In 2001, the Rally for Culture and Democracy withdraws from the government in protest against the handling of riots. The following year in 2002, Prime Minister Ali Benflis's National Liberation Front (FLN) wins general elections despite violence and a low turnout. In 2003, the leader of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) Abassi and his deputy Ali Belhadj are freed from their 12-year sentences. In 2004, President Bouteflika is re-elected to a second term.

In 2011, protests over food prices and unemployment begin, with two people being killed. Later that year, President Bouteflika lifts a 19-year-old state of emergency, meeting the demands of anti-government protestors. In 2012, the FLN and National Democratic Rally win another majority in parliament, with Islamists coming in third. Later that year, the army kills al-Qaeda's deputy leader. In 2013, foreign hostages are killed by Islamist al-Murabitoun group in a siege and in 2014 Bouteflika wins another term as President. In 2016, Parliament passes constitutional reforms limits to two terms for Presidents.

